OCA consumer register

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Speak up & be heard

CONSUMER REGISTER lists summaries of major consumer proposals before Federal agencies. If you wish to submit written comments, include your name & address, state the name & *Federal Register* citation of the proposal on which you are commenting and explain your views briefly & clearly.

Drug efficiency reports

Food & Drug Administration has announced that copies of all previously unreleased findings of the Drug Efficiency Study Group of the **National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council** are available to the public. Reports on most of the 4300 prescription drugs in the study (drugs that FDA approved between 1938 & 1962) are available.

For free information about a particular prescription drug, write to the Drug Efficacy Ssudy Information Control (BD-67), **Bureau of Drugs**, Food & Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 7, page 18105.

Accelerator control systems

Since Sept. 1 a new **Transportation Dept.** safety standard for automobile accelerators has been established to eliminate accidents due to "overspeed."

Accidents have occurred when a car or truck does not slow down after the driver removes his foot from the accelerator or other times when the throttle system fails to work.

Effective Sept. 1, 1973, vehicles will be equipped with at least 2 methods of returning the throttle to idle position after the driver removes his foot from the accelerator. At any speed, the throttle on a vehicle weighing 10,000 pounds or less will have no more than one second to return to the idle position. Vehicles weighing more tha 10,000 pounds will have two seconds. Under extreme cold conditions (0° to minus 40° Fahrenheit), the maximum time will be 3 seconds.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 23, page 20033.

Hexachlorophene

On Sept. 27, **Food & Drug Administration** restricted the use of hexachlorophene in drug & cosmetic products.

FDA made the restriction because it said there is no doubt about the toxicity of hexachlorophene at high levels of use on the skin of premature infants or on damaged skin. A recent number of infant deaths in France were due to a baby powder that had been contaminaetd with 6% hexachlorophene. Data from the University of Washington showed that bathing premature infants with a 3% hexachlorophene solution could cause brain lesions.

FDA concluded that (1) hexachlorophene can be used in cosmetics & drugs only as a preservative & at levels not above 0.1%; (2) it cannot be used in over-the-counter drugs; (3) it should not be used for routine bathing. FDA restricted hexachlorophene's use by physicians to control infections only when other prevention measures are ineffective.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 27, page 20163.

Canned salmon

A new **Food & Drug Administration** standard to upgrade canned Pacific salmon to provide consumers with informative labeling will become effective Oct. 30.

The standard will

- Require cans to be at least 90% full (a series of minimum weights for each can size used will be enforced, with the smallest being permitted to be 3¾ ounces; any can falling below a listed size/weight standard must state that fact on the label);
- Require use of the proper name of the salmon species—such as chinook, coho, pink or red or other accepted name—followed by the scientific name;
- Require labels to state if the skin & vertabrae have been removed (for example if labeled properly, the can could say in letters at least ⅛ inch high "red salmon skinless & backbone removed");
- Require all sections of the salmon meat to be placed in cans vertically for easy removal;
- Permit smaller pieces to be added to fill the can but forbid ground salmon.
- Forbid use of the steelhead species, which the FDA does not consider as a true salmon.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 8, page 18193.

Smoking on planes

Oct. 31 is deadline for comments on a **Civil Aeronautics Board** proposal that would segregate smokers & nonsmokers aboard domestic airlines.

The proposed rule would require airlines to designate a smoking area in the rear of each compartment of an airplane & to enforce a smoking ban throughout the rest of the compartment.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 19, page 19146.

Milk & cream

Nov. 8 is deadline for comments on a **Food & Drug Administration** proposal to amend the standard of identity for such products as milk, lowfat milk, skim milk, half-&-half, light cream, light whipping cream, heavy cream, evaporated milk, concentrated milk, sweetened condensed milk & nonfat dry milk fortified with Vitamins A & D.

The regulation would implement proposals of the 1969 White House Conference on Food & Nutrition, which recommended a change in the way food standards are defined & used. This change would allow any functional ingredient in foods to be used as long as it is subject to a food additive regulation or is generally recognized as safe (GRAS), provided it is not specifically excluded by the standard.

The current proposal would permit improving the consistency of some milk products by adding emulsifiers & stabilizers in addition to the commonly used milk solids & nonfat milk solids.

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The proposal also suggests

- Adding Vitamin D to milk, lowfat milk, skim milk & evaporated milk;
- Allowing optional addition of Vitamin A to milk;
- Requiring fortification of lowfat & skim milk with Vitamin A;
- Providing for special process cream products with improved keeping quality;
- Providing for cream products with added flavoring, as sweetened cream;
- Amending the identity standard for condensed milks containing corn syrup to permit the use of any safe & suitable nutritive sweetner.

Details—*Federal Register*: Sept. 9, 18392. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Habit-forming drugs

Nov. 11 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal that would halt the sale of many narcotic cough preparations unless prescribed by a doctor.

A survey of Bureau of Narcotic & Dangerous Drugs showed a pattern of widespread abuse of preparations using morphine, codeine, dihydrocodeine & ehtylmorphine. The FDA states that these narcotic drugs can become habit forming.

The FDA proposal would require that all such products be labeled "Caution: Federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription."

Details—*Federal Register*: Sept. 12, page 18471. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Enriched macaroni

A new Food & Drug Administration regulation will allow the sale of high-protein "enriched macaroni products with fortified protein." The product will be allowed on grocery shelves starting Nov. 12.

The proposal for the regulation brought in over 800 comments. About 700 were from consumers. Majority of the comments favored the proposal.

The regulation requires that the proportion of milled wheat be larger than the proportion of any other ingredient used & that the protein content be not less than 20% by weight.

The new product will be labeled "Enriched Wheat _____ Macaroni Product—with Fortified Protein." The blank space will contain the name of a type of flour or meal, such as "soy" or "corn," so that consumers will know the ingredient or ingredients made from non-wheat sources or from oilseeds.

In addition, products conforming in shape & size to other pasta products will be appropriately labeled. Thus, the words "spaghetti" or "vermicelli" may be used instead of "macaroni product."

There will be no change in the labels for traditional, nonenriched pasta products.

In another move, FDA has issued a temporary permit for 12 months to the Prince Manufacturing Co. & First National Stores Inc. for limited interstate marketing tests of "enriched macaroni made from wheat and 8% soya" & "enriched spaghetti made from wheat and 8% soya." The label will include the percentage of minimum daily requirement for the vitamins & iron supplied by the product.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 13, pages 18525 & 18575; CONSUMER REGISTER: June 1.

Child protection

Nov. 13 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal that calls for better packaging of poisonous substances used for insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides & similar purposes.

Experience has shown that even a tiny amount of some poisons that have been carelessly left open or that can easily be opened by children have proved fatal—some 40 deaths in the 1968-70 period.

Only packages that are commonly purchased for home & garden use are included since it is felt that there is no need to establish a standard for commercial use. Liquid poisons packaged in less than one-gallon containers & nonliquid poisons in packages of 5 pounds or less must meet Federal standards. The proposal would require that not less than 85% of all children must not be able to open a package of these poisons. When they are shown how, not less than 80% of all children still must be unable to open the package.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 14, page 18629. Send comments to the Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Women's rights

Women buyers & beneficiaries of U.S. Savings Bonds (Series E & Series H) no longer have to use a "Miss" or "Mrs." or any other title before their name.

Treasury Dept. says that, effective immediately, one's Social Security number must be used instead. Men must provide Social Security number for Series H, but Treasury does not yet require their Social Security number for Series E.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 20, page 19358.

Washing carpets

Federal Trade Commission has announced that its washing instructions for most carpets will not be issued until Nov. 3.

A majority of carpets now for sale contain alumina trihydrate, a flame retardent, in the backing. FTC had determined that machine washing would remove the flameproofing.

An alternate washing procedure, which would preserve the chemical & thus keep the fire-resistant standard required by the Flammable Fabrics Act, is now being formulated.

Details—*Federal Register:* Sept. 21, page 19674.